

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
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April 27, 1999      LB 144

CLERK:            Senator Bohlke would move to amend.      (AM0880,  
Legislative Journal page 1381.)

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN:    Senator Bohlke, you're recognized to open  
on your motion...your amendment, excuse me

SENATOR BOHLKE:    Thank you, Mr. President and members.    The amendment significantly changes LB 144 and actually puts in place the Department of Education's priority issue this session, and that has to do with assessment. As you remember, or some of you may remember, we started down this road quite a while ago in saying that we would do a test. We delayed it by one year, originally, so the department could do some development of that, and we changed it to an assessment. We had a task force that worked on it one entire interim. We had testing companies in. We, on the Education Committee, probably learned about as much as possible on testing and what direction the state should go. Why should we do testing? If you remember, we have implemented standards. It only follows then that you want to have some measurement to see if the standards are making a difference in Nebraska and in our classrooms. Originally, we seemed to be at loggerheads about which way to go. There were those people who said we should do one test, and there were those who were saying, you do not want to do one test and rank your schools, top to bottom, that is not what we're trying to accomplish. Last year, on our interim...during our interim study, as we visited schools, I think it finally crystallized for me in seeing the report card that one school, and I've said that as an example, that one happened to be Wisner-Pilger, I've seen others, that was what I then saw as the accountability piece I was looking for. The report card lists things like the number of hours, advanced hours, advanced degrees your teachers have, how many days the students miss school, how many days your teachers miss school, how you do on the tests that you now do in your school district, follow-up, tracking of your graduates, what...how do they rank your school, how well-prepared were they? Really good information. The department has agreed to go forward with a statewide report card. And so, with that in mind, I think most of us were saying, that's the accountability piece we wanted to see; that's where we wanted to present information to the public that they would like to know about how their schools are doing. We will have a statewide report card,